

What follows is a “snapshot” of the Eastside pilot library to showcase how they implemented the five components of Stay & Play.

Eastside serves families across the Santa Barbara community. Many participants walk to the library, several drive 5 miles or less and a few come from as far as 45 minutes away. Nannies, babysitters, grandparents and parents attend Stay & Play. Several caregivers bring their own as well as other children. Of the participants 60% are Spanish-speaking and many English-speaking parents expressed interest in their children hearing Spanish and some of them have varying levels of fluency in Spanish as well. One of the two library staff members for Stay & Play was bilingual in English and Spanish. Several of the children were supported by occupational and developmental therapy and their caregivers chose to attend Stay & Play for the socialization.

The format at Eastside was a 2-hour program. They started Stay & Play before the library officially opened and had a flexible “start time” which helped caregivers to relax about being on time with toddlers. They kept the schedule and room set-up consistent which helped people know what to expect:

- 8:30am opened the library to participants
- 40 minutes of free play
- 9:10am informal group time with a story
- 40 minutes of free play
- gradual goodbyes

The Five Components:

Outreach (*Targeted and focused outreach to family, friend, and neighbor child care providers*) The team took advantage of their close proximity to two neighboring schools. They decided to coordinate Stay & Play with school drop off. To promote the program a sandwich board was placed on the sidewalk. Flyers were hung in local businesses. Word of mouth encouraged participation. The timing worked well for caregivers who were already in the area. This free play time also allowed for parents to start with their children at the library and then have caregivers meet them there.





They noticed that the transition to caregiver and the goodbye to the parent wasn't as hard this way. Providing coffee was a nice way to welcome caregivers.

Play (*Meaningful play opportunities that are child-directed and encourage caregiver and child interactions*) When possible, the team would set up the room the night before. They used rugs to delineate different areas and set up a variety of “stations” that were balanced for developmental needs. They played soft music in the background and they set up quiet spaces for children who needed it. They used a storage cart to store materials and toys which also allowed them to easily set up outside too, which they did regularly. They had a “to be cleaned” bin for toys and they used a small dishwasher to clean and sanitize things. The library team was often on the floor engaged with children and adults.



Story Time (*Library story times specifically designed for informal child care providers and the children in their care*) The story time component was integrated into an informal group time that included one or two stories. It was always bilingual as requested by the participants.

Resources (*Programming, resource materials, and/or community experts to better equip informal child care providers with child development, safety, and early learning information*) They talked with participants and observed their interests as they thought about who to invite, including for instance, child development experts who could answer individual questions, a waste management team who the children had become interested in during garbage pick-ups each week during Stay & Play, and the local Food Bank. The library team prepared all of the outreach specialists for a more informal group and encouraged them to prepare only a short presentation and then have one-on-one conversations with caregivers.



Food (*Provision of food or opportunities to accommodate the food needs of children and their caregivers*) The library team brewed coffee that was ready for the adults when they arrived. Families were allowed to bring their own food and eat when needed. The library offered simple pre-packaged snacks to the children after story time

